

# Finding Aid to the Martha's Vineyard Museum Record Unit 179

## Captain Henry Manter Papers 1841-1913

By Karin Stanley

### Descriptive Summary

**Repository:** Martha's Vineyard Museum

**Call Number:**

**Title:** Captain Henry Manter Papers

**Creator:**

**Quantity:** 1.5 cubic feet

**Abstract:** This collection of the correspondence of Captain Henry Manter contains original letters, (1841-1875) between Captain Manter and his family, primarily his wife Mary. It also contains original business correspondence about the whaling and shipping business he was engaged in. Some other family papers are also included (1842- 1913), along with a diary written in 1875 by his son Ellis. Ship log books from his merchant voyages from 1854-1873 round out this collection.

### Administrative Information

**Acquisition Information:** The Henry Manter Papers were acquired by the Martha's Vineyard Museum in \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_.

**Processing Information:** Karin Stanley

**Access Restrictions:** none

**Use Restrictions:** none

**Preferred citation for publication:** Martha's Vineyard Museum, Captain Henry Manter Papers, Record Unit 179.

### Index Terms

- Captain Henry Manter
- Mary C. Luce Manter
- Whaleship *Pocahontas* (Portsmouth)
- Whaleship *Pocahontas* (Holmes Hole)
- Whaleship *Virginia*
- Merchant ship *America*
- Merchant ship *Anglo Saxon*
- Merchant ship *Samuel Robertson*
- Merchant ship *William Wilcox*
- Merchant ship *Marianne Nottebohn*
- Howland & Frothingham
- Henry Manter Jr.
- Ellis Manter

## Series and Subseries Arrangement

Series I: Personal Correspondence

Subseries A: Incoming Correspondence (1844-1871)

Subseries B: Outgoing Correspondence (1843-1866)

Series II: Business Correspondence

Subseries A: Incoming Correspondence (1842 - 1875)

Subseries B: Outgoing Correspondence (1870- 1871)

Subseries C: Telegraphs (1871)

Series III: Business Papers (1867-1870)

Series IV: Family Papers 1841(2) - 1913)

Subseries A: Letters (1841 - 1889)

Subseries B : Postcards (1913)

Subseries C: Ellis Manter diary (1875)

Series V: Ship Log books (1854-1873)

## Historical Note:

Henry Manter, born in West Tisbury in 1816, was one of six children of Thomas and Hannah (Luce) Manter. His father died of drowning in 1821 when Henry was only five. Six years later, at age 11 Henry went to sea. By the age of 20 he was captain of the Portsmouth, NH whale ship *Pocahontas*. He would spend most of his life crossing the world's oceans, either as whaling master or merchant captain. After his first command he came home long enough to marry Mary C. Luce of Chilmark in 1843. A few months later he went back to sea, this time on another *Pocahontas*, out of Holmes Hole. Despite a heartfelt letter to Mary in October 1844, proclaiming he would never leave home again, Henry went on to command one more whaleship (*Virginia*), and five merchant ships (*America*, *Anglo Saxon*, *Samuel Robertson*, *William Wilcox*, and *Marianne Nottebohn*), not retiring until 1873.

Like many sea-going men Henry missed much of his children's early years. His first son, Henry Jr. was born in 1847, one month after Henry left on his four year whaling voyage on *Virginia*. His second son, Ellis was born in 1856. Henry missed his sons, and sent them fatherly advice from afar. In 1864 he wrote Henry Jr. to "stick close to your school and learn all you can", and to speak kind to his brother and help him with his studies. A diary written by Ellis in 1875 is included in this collection. Henry's last voyage on the *Marianne Nottebohn* was less lonely; Mary joined him for at least part of this trip (1870-1873), traveling from New York to San Francisco, then on to Australia and back to San Francisco. Mary may have joined him on the final leg of this voyage, from San Francisco crossing the Atlantic to Ireland, then returning home in 1873. Finally at age 57 Henry settled down with Mary on William Street in Holmes Hole until his death February 17, 1879.

## **Scope and Content Note:**

The 1.5 cubic feet of documents are arranged chronologically within their series. These documents are primarily original letters between Captain Henry Manter and his family and business associates. The bulk of the personal correspondence covering the years 1843 - 1866 are letters written between Henry and his wife Mary while Henry was at sea. Many other letters may have been written, but never received given the difficulty of locating a ship at sea. Mary simply addressed her letters to the ship and the ocean, such as Ship Virginia, Pacific Ocean. A few letters and postcards exchanged between other family members are included in this collection, (1841-1913) along with a diary kept by Henry's son Ellis in 1875.

The business correspondence collection spans from 1842 - 1871. Some of these letters are from former crewmen, often requesting a place on a ship. Many are correspondence between Henry and Howland & Frothingham regarding freight and cargo issues, (1870-1872). Other business papers include a few telegrams, receipts, and invoices. Also included are Henry's merchant ship log books from his voyages on the *America*, *Anglo Saxon*, *Samuel Robertson*, *William Wilcox*, and *Marianne Nottebohn*. The MVM also has in their collection the log book from the whaling ship *Virginia* 1847-1851 (#96)

## **Series Descriptions**

### **Series I: Personal Correspondence (1843-1871)**

This series contains letters written between Henry Manter and family members (primarily his wife Mary) while he was at sea on a variety of whaling and merchant voyages over the years.

### **Subseries A: Incoming Correspondence (1844-1871)**

Box: 1 of 3

Folder 1: Feb. 11, 1844 - June 21 1844 (May 17, 1844-June 21, 1844 to ship *Pocahontas*)

Folder 2: Aug. 3, 1846 - Dec. 3, 1846

Folder 3: Aug. 24 1847 - Aug. 15, 1848 (Aug. 27, 1847 - Aug. 15, 1848 to ship *Virginia*)

Folder 4: Aug. 27, 1848 - Feb. 17, 1850 (to ship *Virginia*)

Folder 5: July 3, 1870 - June 11, 1871

## **Subseries B: Outgoing Correspondence (1843-1866)**

Box 1 of 3

Folder 6: Dec. 27, 1843 – March 9, 1845 (Aug. 15, 1844 – March 9, 1845 from ship *Pocahontas*)

Folder 7: March 10, 1845 – Nov. 25, 1845 (from ship *Pocahontas*)

Folder 8: Feb. 7, 1855 – Aug. 5, 1863 (from Chinchas Islands, Sandwich Islands, Rio de Janeiro)

Folder 9: Feb 2, 1864 – Nov. 9, 1864 (from Chinchas Islands)

Folder 10: Nov. 24, 1864 – Dec 22, 1864 (from Chinchas Islands)

Folder 11: July 2, 1865 – 1866 (from Rotterdam and Boston)

## **Series II: Business Correspondence (1842(6) – 1875)**

This series contains letters and telegraphs written between Henry Manter and business associates regarding crew positions, freight issues, and cargo concerns.

## **Subseries A: Incoming Correspondence (1842(6)-1875)**

Box: 2 of 3

Folder 1: Aug 22, 1845 (6)- Sept. 1, 1846

Folder 2: Jan 9, 1847 – Jan 20, 1847 (written to Martha's Vineyard)

Folder 3: April 26, 1847 – July 7, 1847 (written to Martha's Vineyard)

Folder 4: Feb. 22, 1850 – April 25, 1870 (written to Captain Manter on ship-board)

Folder 5: June 23, 1870 – March 16, 1870 (from Howland & Frothingham)

Folder 6: March 29, 1871 – May 23, 1871 (from Howland & Frothingham)

Folder 7: July 18, 1871 – Dec, 30, 1871 (from Howland & Frothingham)

Folder 8: July 11, 1874 – March 15, 1875 (written from Liverpool)

## **Subseries B: Outgoing Correspondence (1870-1872)**

Box 2 of 3

Folder 9: Feb. 4, 1870 – July 22, 1871 (to Howland & Frothingham)

## **Subseries C: Telegrams (1871 - 1872)**

Box 2 of 3

Folder 10: Jan. 26, 1871 – Feb. 23, 1872

## **Series III: Business Papers (1867-1873)**

This series includes receipts and invoices to Henry Manter for purchases in Dublin and New York.

Box 2 of 3

Folder 11: Aug. 3, 1867 – April 3, 1873

## **Series IV: Family Papers (1842 - 1913)**

This series includes correspondence between other family members.

## **Subseries A: Letters (1842 – 1889)**

Box 2 of 3

Folder 12: Aug. 8, 1842 – May 9, 1889

**Subseries B: Postcards (1907-1913)**

Box 2 of 3

Folder 13: April 30, 1907 - Nov. 2, 1913

**Subseries C: Ellis Manter diary (1875)**

Box 2 of 3

Folder 14: Diary 1875

**Subseries V: Ship Log books (1854-1873)**

Box 3 of 3

Folder 1: Ship's log *America* August 29, 1854 - July 4, 1855

Folder 2: Ship's logs *Anglo Saxon*, *Samuel Robertson*, *Jaboatao*, *William Wilcox*  
November 1855 - September 1865

Folder 3: Ship's log *William Wilcox*, December 15, 1865 - January 25, 1867

Folder 4: Ship's log *William Wilcox*, February 26, 1867 - August 3, 1867

Folder 5: Ship's log *Marianne Nottebohn*, July 20, 1870 - June 6, 1873